

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 11 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-5 and 7-9 are allowed. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112, 102(b) and § 103.¹

Objection to Specification

The Specification is objected to for allegedly not disclosing a tracker roller having “at least two different diameters” as set forth in claim 11. The phrase “at least” has been deleted from claim 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Claim 7

Claim 7 is indicated by the Examiner to be allowed, but claim 7 was previously amended to properly depend from claim 11. Accordingly, claim 7 should either have been objected to or rejected similarly to claim 11. In view of the amendments and arguments discussed below, Applicants assert that claim 7 should be allowed.

Claim 11 - Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, *first paragraph*, because “at least two different diameters” is allegedly not set forth in the specification.

Claim 11 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, *second paragraph*, because there is allegedly “no defined relationship between the “at least two different diameters” and the outer surface of the tracker roller.” Office Action, page 3.

¹ The Office Action Summary indicates that claim 11 is allowed and claims 1-5 and 7-9 are rejected, but the opposite is obviously true as evidenced by the rest of the Office Action.

Claim 11 recites:

“wherein the tracker roller has ~~at least two~~ different diameters at both right and left sides in the widthwise direction of the rubber projections, the two different diameters making up the outer surface of the tracker roller such that a contact area of the endless inner periphery rolling contact surface with the outer surface of the tracker roller in a fixed widthwise region on respective left and right sides of the tracker roller is in the range of 30% to 70% with respect to the area of the outer surface of the tracker roller. . . .”

In view of the deletion of the phrase “at least,” Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, *first* paragraph, be withdrawn.

Further, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, *second* paragraph should also be withdrawn because claim 11 defines the two different diameters as making up the outer surface of the tracker roller; in other words, the relationship between the two different diameters and the outer surface of the tracker roller is adequately defined.

Claim 11 - Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claim 11 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by newly cited **Slemmons (U.S. 2,494,065)** and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over previously cited **Inaoka (U.S. 6,890,042)**.

Applicants respectfully submit that because claim 11 defines that the two different diameters are “at both right and left sides in the widthwise direction of the rubber projections,” as shown above, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 should be withdrawn as neither Slemmons nor Inaoka teaches this.

Slemmons’s FIG. 4 shows a tracker roller 14 that has two different diameters only if the center portion of the tracker roller directly over the ribs 18 is included. Therefore, Applicants

respectfully submit that because claim 11 defines that the two different diameters are on the left and right sides of the ribs/rubber projections, the rejection in view of Slemmons should be withdrawn.

Inaoka's FIG. 4 shows a similar structure to Slemmons's. The tracker roller 3 has two different diameters only if the center portion of the tracker roller directly over the rubber projections 12 is included. The Examiner acknowledges this by saying, "[a]s shown in figure 4, a tracker roller 3 straddles the projections, and has an outer surface (including the center portion) which comprises at least two different diameters." Office Action, page 5 (emphasis added).

Accordingly, Applicants again respectfully submit that because claim 11 defines that the two different diameters are on the right and left sides of the rubber projections, the rejection in view of Inaoka should also be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Claim 11 remains the only issue to be resolved before allowance of the application. Applicants submit that the amendments discussed herein should overcome the rejections to claim 11 as well as the objection to the specification.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.


Respectfully submitted,

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